XLIX. *A remarkable Case of the Efficacy of the Bark in a Mortification. In a Letter to* William Watson, *M. D. F. R. S. from Mr.* Richard Grindall, *Surgeon to the* London *Hospital.*

Austin-Friars, Dec. 7th, 1757.

SIR,

Read Dec. 8, 1757. THE following case being very singular has induced me to lay it before the Royal Society, and beg the favour to do it through your means. Although numerous instances are related in the records of medicine, of the great danger in interrupting nature in her operations, there is not one (so far as I know), in which more violent and extraordinary effects have been produced, than in the following.

It may happen also, that this instance may be of service in ascertaining the virtue of the medicine in intermittents, when in the hands of men of judgment.

On the 28th of June 1757. Mary Alexander, aged 31 years, of the parish of Whitechapel, was brought into the London hospital, having a mortification in both hands, which reached about an inch and half above the wrists. All her toes, and about an inch of one foot beyond the last joint, were mortified; her nose was also intirely destroyed by a mortification; and all these happened at the same time. Upon inquiry into the cause of this misfortune, I found, that on Monday the 30th of May she was seized with a quotidian

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quotidian ague, which uſually began about three of the clock in the afternoon, and laſted near two hours; which was ſucceeded by a hot fit, and then a violent ſweat. And in this manner ſhe was afflicted for ſeven days without any material alteration; when, being informed by a neighbour, of a perſon, who had an infallible remedy for the cure of an ague, ſhe applied to him. He brought her two phials, containing about an ounce and half each, of a pale yellowiſh liquor; one of which he directed her to take directly, promiſing, that ſhe ſhould have no return of the fit of conſequence; and that, if ſhe had any ſmall return, the ſecond bottle ſhould cure her effectually. In conſequence of which, ſhe took one doſe, which was at the time the cold fit had been on about a quarter of an hour: ſhe had no ſooner ſwallowed it, but, as ſhe ſays, her ſtomach was on fire, and felt as if ſhe had ſwallowed the ſtrongeſt dram poſſible. The cold fit left her inſtantly; but ſhe was immediately ſeized with ſo violent a fever, as to make her burn, and be extremely thirſty, all the following night; much more ſo than ever ſhe had been before, till the next morning, when a ſweat a little relieved her from the violent heat. When ſhe roſe in the morning, ſhe was much troubled with a great itching in the hands, feet, and noſe; and ſoon after all thoſe parts began to feel numbed, or, as ſhe deſcribes it, as if her hands and feet were aſleep; which ſhe took but little notice of, till the evening of that day, when ſhe found the nails of both hands and feet were turning black, and, at the ſame time feeling great pain in both, as alſo in her noſe, and that they appeared of a darkiſh red colour, like the ſkin in cold weather.

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Upon which, at nine o'clock that night ſhe ſent for an apothecary, from whom, I have ſince been informed, the perſon before mentioned had bought the medicine, which he gave her. The apothecary was not at home; his journeyman went, and finding the woman had a difficulty of breathing, ordered her a mixture with ſperma ceti and ammoniacum to be taken occaſionally. The apothecary did not ſee her himſelf till the 16th of June, when finding her in a very bad condition, that her hands, and feet, and noſe, were intirely black, and had many veſicles or ſmall bladders upon them, filled with a blackiſh bloody water; he opened them, and let out the fluid, and dreſſed them with yellow baſilicon; and in this manner continued treating her till the 20th of the ſame month, when, finding no material alteration for the better, he ordered her a browniſh mixture, of which ſhe was to take four ſpoonfuls every four hours; which, he informed me, was a decoction of the bark; and ſays, on taking this, ſhe was better, as the mortification ſeemed inclined to ſtop. But as it was a bad caſe, he adviſed the woman to be carried to an hoſpital: and in this condition was ſhe brought in, when ſhe was immediately put into a courſe of the bark, taking a drachm of the powder every four hours; and in 48 hours taking it there was a perfect ſeparation of all the mortified parts. She was then ordered to take it only three times in 24 hours; and purſuing this method for eight days, there was a very good digeſtion from the parts above the mortification.

The mortified part became now ſo offenſive, that the poor woman preſſed me much to take off her hands, aſſuring me ſhe would go through the opera-

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tions with good courage, being very deſirous to live, though in this miſerable condition.

On the 12th of July I took off both her hands: I had very little more to do, than ſaw the bones, nature having ſtopped the bleeding, when ſhe ſtopped the mortification. In a day or two after, I took off all the toes from both feet, and now diſcontinued the bark, the parts appearing in a healthy and healing condition; which went on ſo for five weeks, when, on a ſudden, the parts began to look livid, her ſtomach failed her, and ſhe was feveriſh; but, upon taking an ounce of the bark, in 36 hours her ſores began again to look well. She was not ſuffered to leave off the bark ſo ſoon this time, but continued taking it twice a day for a month. She is now almoſt well: that part of her face, from whence the noſe mortified, was healed in ſeven weeks; the ſtumps of both arms are intirely healed; and both feet are well, only waiting for one piece of bone ſcaling off, which I believe will be in a very ſhort time; and ſhe is now in good health.

The perſon, who gave her this medicine, is a Barber and Peruke-maker at Bow. I applied to him ſeveral times, to inform me what it was he had given her. The affair was talked of ſo much in his neighbourhood, and the man threatned by the woman's huſband, that for a long time I could not get him to tell me, till I told him, I had been informed where he bought the medicines; and the time of the day, that he had them, correſponding with the time of his giving them to the woman, and that I knew it was tincture of myrrh, he at laſt told me, that he had frequently given the above quantity of an ounce and half

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of it in an ague; that it had never done any harm; and hardly ever failed to cure. Upon which information, I carried ſome tincture of myrrh to the woman, who taſted it, and is well aſſured it is the ſame liquor the barber gave her in her ague-fit.

I am, with reſpect,

Your obliged and obedient Servant.

Richard Grindall.

L. *A Letter to the Rev.* Tho. Birch, *D. D. Secret. R. S. from* John Pringle, *M. D. F. R. S. incloſing Two Papers communicated to him by* Robert Whytt, *M. D. F. R. S.*

Pallmall-Court, St. James's, Dec. 10. 1757.

SIR,

Read Dec. 15. 1757.

ABOUT three weeks ago I put into your hands an extract of a letter, I had then received from Dr. Whytt, containing a poſtſcript to his *Obſervations on Lord* Walpole's *Caſe*; and ſlightly mentioning ſome doubts he had then about the juſtneſs of Dr. Springsfeld's experiments with lime-water, from ſome trials he himſelf had made, upon reading that gentleman's curious treatiſe on the extraordinary lithontriptic quality of the waters at Carlſbad in Bohemia. Within theſe few Days, Dr. Whytt having favoured me with a full account of thoſe experiments, I have herewith ſent you his paper, in order, if you pleaſe, to lay it before